

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A system for communicating variable data between a data management system and a document production system comprising:  
a data management system having a data manager for obtaining variable data from a database;  
a document production system for composing documents containing the variable data obtained from the database; and  
a message bridge for coupling the data management system to the document production system so that the document production system and data management system communicate data messages for the proofing and generation of documents populated with the variable data.
2. The system of claim 1, the message bridge further comprising:  
a transport adapter for collecting and converting variable data elements into data messages for transmission to the document composition engine.
3. The system of claim 2, the transport adapter further comprising:  
a plurality of transport adapter components, some of the transport adapter components collecting variable data and other transport adapter components converting the collected variable data into data messages for transmission to the document production system.

4. The system of claim 2, the transport adapter further comprising:  
at least one transport adapter component for receiving document production system messages containing data from the document production system.
5. The system of claim 4, the document production system messages including:  
soft documents composed by the document production system that contain variable data obtained from the data management system.
6. The system of claim 4, the document production system messages including:  
document production system status messages.
7. The system of claim 4, the document production system messages including:  
queries for variable data from the data management system.
8. The system of claim 2, the message bridge further comprising:  
a Web server having transport adapter components for communicating with the document production system.

9. The system of claim 5 further comprising:  
an application client interface for receiving soft documents and  
generating proofing instructions.
10. A method for communicating between a document production  
system and a data management system comprising:  
obtaining variable data from a database in a data management  
system; and  
coupling the data management system to a document production  
system through a message bridge so that the document production  
system and data management system communicate.
11. The method of claim 10, the obtaining of the variable data further  
comprising:  
collecting and converting variable data into data messages for  
transmission to the document production system.
12. The method of claim 11, further comprising:  
receiving document production messages containing data from the  
document production system.

13. The method of claim 12, the document production system message reception including:  
  
receiving soft documents containing variable data that were composed by the document production system.
14. The method of claim 12, the document production system message reception including:  
  
receiving document production system status messages.
15. The method of claim 12, the document production system message reception including:  
  
receiving queries for variable data from the data management system.
16. The method of claim 11 further comprising:  
  
communicating the data messages with transport adapter components in a Web server.
17. The method of claim 14 further comprising:  
  
receiving soft documents from a document production system and generating proofing instructions for the document production system.